The Answer Is Simple

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Summary: ONESHOT. Sakura is nearing the end of her pregnancy, and Sasuke's anxiety over the situation is beginning to show its ugly head. When the time comes for the baby to arrive, will the former Team 7 member be able to fall into the role of a father?

The Answer Is Simple

Sakura's usually toned stomach had grown large over the past several months, and the reality of the situation was staring Sasuke straight in the face in the form of a swollen belly: the two former teammates were going to be parents.

Sasuke had returned to the village as he had promised Sakura he would after the war came to an end, and it had not stopped at one visit; if he was traveling through an area close to Konohagakure, he would frequently drop into the village for a well-needed rest from his journey, and in turn, he would all too often find himself at the medical kunoichi's doorstep. It was always relieving to him to see that she was faring well in his absence, and before long, they had grown more intimate with each other than they had been when they were both part of Team 7.

When the ex-avenger returned to his old home to find out that his companion was pregnant, he was dumbstruck. Although the thought of restoring his clan had crossed his mind from time to time, he had been totally engrossed in avenging his family for so long that his mind could not wrap around the fact that he could let go of his hatred and strive toward a future. At Sakura's admission to pregnancy, the astounded Uchiha made the decision to remain close by, if not in, Konohagakure. He wished to see how the mother of his child would grow, both physically and mentally; the idea of the woman who was once so weak becoming a strong, dedicated mother intrigued him.

Sasuke did not think much about being a father for the first four or

so months of his companion's pregnancy as she had not begun showing significant signs of her condition, so it was not difficult for him to look passed the reality of their circumstances. At around five months, however, Sakura's stomach began to form a visible bump, and in addition to this change, her breasts started filling out, she excitedly explained that she could feel the baby's first movements, and she found herself having even odder cravings than she had towards the beginning. Seeing the changes in the mother of his child should have been gratifying and exciting to the former rogue ninja, and yet with every new development, he became slightly more afraid.

Now at almost nine months, the medical kunoichi was swollen nearly to her breaking point, but despite the handicap that the pregnancy had placed on her, when an important mission came up and Sasuke had little choice but to travel away from the village, she was intent on following. He argued with her about the decision, but she was adamant that she would be alright and wanted to tag along. The irritated Sharingan user eventually found himself giving into his companion's request, against his better judgment. He knew he would not be able to focus solely on the mission with her at his side, and he could not share in her excitement about every new happening in the pregnancy as an unidentifiable fear continued gripping at his heart.

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><p>"Sasuke-Kun, I'm really sorry, but could we maybe rest for tonightâ€¦?" Sakura plopped down heavily onto a log, placing her right foot on her left knee and massaging the sole of it. "My feet are swollen, and carrying this baby around has left me pretty exhausted after such a long walk."<p>

Sasuke narrowed his eyes in annoyance at his companion, making a 'tsk' noise before turning away from her. "I told you not to come along on this mission. If I had known that your only intention in following me out here was to continuously hinder my ability to complete the tasks I was given, I would have made the more appropriate decision of leaving you in the village." The former rogue ninja's expression took on a softer edge when he glanced over his shoulder to see that tears had begun forming in the young woman's eyes. He sighed audibly in resignation.

"Iâ€¦I'm sorry, Sasuke-Kunâ€¦You're right. I shouldn't have pushed you to let me come with you. I justâ€¦wanted to make sure you were around if the babyâ€”"

"We will rest here for tonight," the somewhat agitated Uchiha interrupted. "I will gather wood for a fire. Stay seated where you are and call for me if anything happens." At his final words, he disappeared into the dense forest, leaving his companion to rest in solitude for a bit.

Upon returning to the small clearing where Sakura had stopped to recuperate her strength, Sasuke noted that the sun had sunken low in the sky, allowing for the moon to reveal its presence; he made a fire to shed some light on the darkening woodland around them. He and his companion sat in a brief silence, just listening to the sounds echoing throughout the forest, until the soon-to-be mother gasped loudly, jerking the startled young man from any thoughts. "What is it? What's wrong?" he questioned, jumping to his feet and activating his Sharingan.

"Oh, sorry, Sasuke-Kun. I didn't mean to alarm you. The baby just gave me a strong kick that I wasn't exactly expecting, that's all," Sakura explained while lightly rubbing her stomach. "He or she is being very feisty right now. Would you like to feel?"

"No," Sasuke replied shortly, causing a troubled expression to make its way onto his companion's face. He had never taken the time to place his hand on her stomach, and although he knew it was not right, he still had no urge to do so.

"Why are you always so reluctant to feel my stomach? I'm having your childâ€¦You could at least act interested inâ€”"

"You, of all people, should know that I do not have normal, pleasure-driven urges like you, Naruto, and the rest of our comrades. Don't question my reasoning," the ex-avenger interrupted, sitting back down and disengaging his Sharingan.

A twinge of anger became present on Sakura's face, and the feeling extended to her voice. "Why did you bother getting me pregnant if you aren't even willing to _try_ and connect with our baby? I've been nothing but understanding and loving toward you since the day we became part of the same team, but I can't allow you to continue pushing your child away before he or she is even born!"

"You continue to act as if you know me. I am not the same person I was when we were a part of Team 7, and I am not the same person I was for those years I was seeking revenge. I don't need your understanding or your love. I still walk the path of darkness; I just have different motives behind it now. I cannot be close to a child that I will never be able to be a true father to. I have begun restoring my clan, and that is the only idea behind a 'family' that I care to humor." Sasuke watched as a wave of sadness washed over his companion. He felt the weight of regret tugging at him ever so slightly, but he knew he had never been good with words; that had always been Naruto's job. He had little knowledge of how to properly speak with other people, and the fear and uncertainty he had towards becoming a father made the situation worse.

"Iâ€¦I thoughtâ€¦" Sakura sniffled as she attempted to respond, uncontrollable tears streaming down her cheeks. "I thought that you chose me to have a child with becauseâ€¦because you thought I would be a good mother in your absence from the villageâ€¦and because youâ€¦loved meâ€¦A family is not just another missionâ€¦It's a commitmentâ€¦and it requires nurture and loveâ€¦If I had known you feel the way you doâ€¦I wouldn't haveâ€¦I wouldn't have allowed any of this to happen!" The distressed young woman quickly got up and fled into the dense forest, seeming not to care about any of the dangers that could possibly lurk within.

"Sakura!" The regretful Uchiha called after his companion to no avail. She had disappeared from his sight, and he was not sure if it would be best to chase after her or to let her be. _What am I so afraid of, dammit?! _he thought to himself, punching a tree near him. _What should I do now?_

Sasuke sat in a lonely and uncomfortable silence for what felt like an eternity, though it could have only been about an hour. The saddened kunoichi had not returned after running into the thicket of

trees, and to his own surprise, he was beginning to genuinely worry for her. Sighing in annoyance, the Sharingan user leapt to his feet and leisurely walked in the direction that the soon-to-be mother had gone in. He watched carefully for her as he followed the path that he believed she took until coming upon a small lake. At the water's edge stood Sakura, her face in her hands and her shoulders rising and lowering so that it was obvious that she was sobbing.

"What are you doing? Come back to the camp site," Sasuke calmly demanded, walking out of the dark forest just far enough for the crying woman to see him.

"Justâ€¦leave me aloneâ€¦I don't want toâ€¦talk right nowâ€¦" Sakura struggled out between her sobs.

"Stop being dramatic, Sakura. It is not safe for you to be out here alone."

"Sinceâ€¦Since when did you c-care about m-my safetyâ€¦? I'll beâ€¦fine hereâ€¦"

The ex-avenger stared silently for a moment in an attempt to gather his thoughts. Although he was losing his patience, he did not want to make the situation any more troublesome than it already was. "Listen, Sakura, about what I saidâ€¦I'm sorry. I didn'tâ€”" Sasuke was cut off by a groan from his companion. She had clutched her stomach and was bent over slightly, panting heavily. "Hm? What's wrong?"

"Theâ€¦babyâ€¦" the pained kunoichi forced out in response.

"The baby?" the Sharingan user questioned, but Sakura did not have to answer verbally; her body did it for her. With another loud groan, water started streaming down her legs.

"I've been havingâ€¦minor contractionsâ€¦which is normal for someoneâ€¦as far along as I amâ€¦but now they've gottenâ€¦a lot worseâ€¦Iâ€¦I'm in laborâ€¦"

Sasuke's eyes widened as he processed the situation. Running over to his companion, he placed one hand on her shoulder and one hand on her stomach to guide her into sitting down on a nearby rock. In doing this, he felt something that he never had beforeâ€”his child's movement. He froze, awestruck. The baby's kicks were so powerful; he hadn't imagined that they would be so prominent. All of a sudden, he was filled with regret at not having been more involved with the pregnancy; feeling his child's strong movements made him realize just how important the situation was.

"Thisâ€¦This baby is going to be coming fastâ€¦I was ignoring the pains during our journeyâ€¦for as long as I couldâ€¦but I think I'm reachingâ€¦the final stretchâ€¦" Sakura explained, allowing herself to sit.

"W-what should I do?" the panicked Uchiha asked.

"Find someone!"

"Find someone? We're in the middle of a large forest. I doubt that there will be anyoneâ€”"

"FIND. SOMEONE. NOW."

The tone in the mother-to-be's voice shook Sasuke to his core. He had never had so much fear and panic consuming him all at once. At her command, he rushed into the dense trees, still unsure of what to do. He was so distracted by his thoughts that he did not notice that there were others in his presence; before he knew what was happening, he bumped into someone. Jumping backward and activating his Sharingan, the ex-avenger readied himself for battle. Very quickly, he realized his preparations were unnecessary, as he had run into Jugo. Behind the gentle giant stood Suigetsu andâ€¦

"KARIN!" Sasuke shouted, startling all three of the ex-taka members who had just been passing through during their travels.

"Y-yes?" the red-headed kunoichi hesitantly questioned, fearing that her old comrade had malicious intent.

"I need your assistance!"

"Myâ€¦assistance? With what?"

The hurried Uchiha did not waste time answering Karin but instead grabbed her arm and yanked her along with him.

"Well, hi to you tooâ€¦?" Suigetsu stated sarcastically, giving Jugo an inquiring glance. "We should probably follow." Jugo nodded slightly at his friend's suggestion, and then both former criminals began running in the direction that their old comrades had gone.

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><p>"She's in labor?!" Karin screeched, obviously surprised at the situation.<p>

"Yes. I assume she needs you to help deliver the baby," Sasuke explained.

"I don't really have any experience in child delivery, but I'll do my best." The red-haired Uzumaki walked over to Sakura and took her hand, instructing her to lay down in the grass. "Now, Sasuke, you come and give Sakura a place to rest her head. Just let her lay her head on your lap, please." The Sharingan user did as he was told. He usually did not allow people to order him around, but this was a serious exception. He was at a complete loss for what to do on his own.

Karin positioned herself between the mother-to-be's legs, pulling her bottoms down in order to check her progress.

"Umâ€¦How's it looking?" Sasuke awkwardly questioned, earning an odd look from his companion.

"From what I can see, the baby will be here very soon," the former taka member stated, giving a slight smile to her old comrade and his lover. "Do you guys know if it's a boy or a girl
yet?"

"N-noâ€¦Weâ€”well, Iâ€”wanted itâ€¦to be a surpriseâ€¦Sasuke was

tooâ€¦busy with missionsâ€¦to be very attentiveâ€¦" Sakura explained, wincing in pain after every few words. The young Uchiha cast his gaze to his side in shame.

"Surprises are always nice." Karin rubbed the pink-haired kunoichi's leg in an attempt to distract her from the contractions. "Jugo. Suigetsu. I need you two to make a fire and heat me up some water from the lake. I'm also going to need to use one of the small towels you brought along for our travels."

"So, you knew we were here, huh? Alright; you're the boss for now. Let's get to work, pal." The purple-eyed swordsman gave his comrade a light pat on the shoulder and began walking. The usually gentle giant lumbered closely behind.

"Now Sakura, I need you to push for me; push forcibly enough to help the baby along but gently enough to not hurt it, okay?" With a nod in confirmation to her temporary midwife, the mother-to-be began pushing. "You're doing wonderfully! I think it's close!"

Gritting her teeth, Sakura continued pushing for a couple of minutes, and with one final groan, Sasuke heard itâ€”a piercing cry. The exhausted kunoichi's head plopped heavily back onto his lap. He watched intently as Karin rushed to where Suigetsu and Jugo had a pail of water.

"S-Sasukeâ€¦?" Sakura breathed out, obviously on the verge of falling into a deep sleep.

"What is it?" The Sharingan user brushed a few stray hairs out of his companion's face.

"Isâ€¦it a baby boy or a baby girl?"

"Congratulations, you two! It's a beautiful baby girl!" the red-headed kunoichi answered for her old comrade. As the new mother was still recovering from the delivery, she handed the wrapped up bundle of joy to Sasuke first. The piercing screams subsided as he took his child into his arms for the first time. He watched as her eyes fluttered open, and she looked at him intensely.

"Talk to herâ€¦Sasukeâ€¦" Sakura coaxed, a tired smile making its way onto her lips.

"I don'tâ€¦I don't know what to say," the new father admitted. "I'mâ€¦scared. This is all so new to me. Am I even fit to be an adequate fatherâ€¦?"

"Why don't youâ€¦start by calling out her name, my Darling?"

"We never discussed one."

"That's the beauty of itâ€¦right? Just call herâ€¦the first name that comes to mind."

Sasuke held his baby closely, taking in every featureâ€”her small hands poking out from the towel that was wrapped around her, her deep brownâ€”almost blackâ€”eyes that reflected the light of the moon, herâ€¦Wait, he had it. "Sarada," he stated, pushing his index finger into the palm of the baby's hand and allowing her to grip it.

"Sarada, like the female saint who paved the way to a more prosperous future for generations to come after her time. If this child is anything like her mother, she will have the strength to do the same."

Tears began forming in the new mother's eyes once again. The two lovers looked out over the lake, appreciating the new life that had been brought into the world and the beauty surrounding them.

* * *

><p>Everyone in attendance had fallen asleep; the night had been eventful, to say the least. Sasuke's eyes opened slowly to the sight of Sakura breastfeeding the newest addition to their family.<p>

"Sorry, Sasuke-Kun. I didn't mean to wake you. She was hungry." The pink-haired kunoichi lovingly admired her baby.

"No, it's alright. You didn't wake me," the young Uchiha replied, also entranced by the adorable and already strong-willed child that he and his lover had created together.

"Iâ€¦I want to ask you something, if I may."

"What is it?" the former rogue ninja asked as he sat up.

"The things you said earlierâ€¦They hurt me. I just want to know, do you really care for Sarada?"

"Yes, of course I do. In all honesty, I didn't mean what I saidâ€¦I took my own insecurities out on you, and I could not regret it more. I love herâ€¦and I love you, Sakura. You may not ever hear me say it aloud often, but I wouldn't have chosen anyone else to create a family with."

Sakura let out a slight giggle in embarrassment. "I love you too, Sasukeâ€¦You know I always have, but how do I know you truly feel the same about me, huh?" she teased.

"The answer to that is simple," Sasuke replied, wrapping an arm around his companion and kissing their infant on her forehead.

"Well, what is it?"

"You should knowâ€¦because we have herâ€”our beautiful Sarada. Any time you doubt my feelings for you or for her, just look at her. She will forever portray all of the care I have for you both."

End
file.